

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An in-car video system, comprising:
a video camera fixably mounted to a vehicle for capturing an image of an event and producing a corresponding video stream;
a digital video recorder fixably mounted to the vehicle, the digital video recorder having a receiving area being adapted to operably couple a flash memory card to the digital video recorder so that the flash memory functions as a digital video storage medium; and
a controller coupled to the video recorder to control writing of data that is representative of the video stream to a flash memory to thereby generate a stored video record of the event.
2. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the receiving area is further adapted so that the flash memory card is removably couplable to the digital video recorder.
3. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the flash memory is a flash memory card selected from the group consisting of Smart Media, Secure Digital, Multimedia Card, xD-Picture Card and Memory Stick.
4. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the flash memory is a CompactFlash card.

5. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the digital video recorder and controller are integrally packaged and sized to fit substantially within a standard single DIN sized radio opening.

6. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the digital video recorder and controller are integrally packaged and sized to fit substantially within a standard 1.5 DIN sized radio opening.

7. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the digital video recorder and controller are integrally packaged and sized to fit substantially within a standard double DIN sized radio opening.

8. The in-car video system of claim 1 where the digital video recorder and controller are integrally packaged and sized to fit substantially within a factory-sized radio opening of a production vehicle having a police package option.

9. A method of creating a video recording of an event, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a digital video recorder and video camera that are fixably mounted in a vehicle;

capturing video of the event using the car-mounted camera;

transmitting the video to the digital video recorder;

converting the video to a form that is writable to a flash memory, the flash memory being operably coupled to the digital video recorder; and

writing the converted video to the flash memory using the digital video recorder to thereby store a video record of the event on the flash memory.

10. The method of claim 9 including a step of controlling the digital video controller so that video is written to the flash memory automatically upon activation of the vehicle's emergency systems including emergency lights.

11. The method of claim 26 further including a step of providing a plurality of flash memory cards for storage within the vehicle so that when a first flash memory card in the plurality of flash memory cards is filled to capacity, a second flash memory card in the plurality of flash memory cards may be used to replace the first flash memory card.

12. In a vehicle-mounted video system including a car-mounted camera, a method of operating a digital video recorder, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a flash memory card in a receiving area of the digital video recorder, the receiving area being adapted to operably couple the flash memory card to the digital video recorder so that the flash memory functions as a digital video storage medium;

receiving a video stream of an event captured by the camera;

converting the video stream to a form that is writable to the flash memory;

writing the converted video stream to the flash memory to thereby store a record of the event on the flash memory.

13. The method of claim 12 further including a step of reading the stored record from the flash memory.

14. The method of claim 13 further including a step of transmitting the record read from the flash memory to a remote monitor.

15. The method of claim 12 further including a step of removing the flash memory from the video recorder.

16. The method of claim 15 further including a step of storing the removed flash memory.

17. The method of claim 12 further including a step of fixably positioning the digital video recorder substantially within a dashboard area of the vehicle so that the digital video recorder is in a direct operative relationship with a user seated in the front seat of the vehicle.

18. The method of claim 17 where the dashboard area comprises a dashboard portion that is typically used to house a sound system.

19. The method of claim 18 where the dashboard portion is double DIN sized.

20. The method of claim 12 further including a step of receiving a second flash memory card in a receiving area of the digital video recorder, the receiving area being adapted to operably couple the flash memory card to the digital video recorder so that the second flash memory functions as a second digital video storage medium that

automatically stores a portion of the video stream once the other flash memory card becomes full.